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# emerging trends

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# Religion, The Military Are Among Nation's Most Trusted Institutions

PRINCETON, N.J. — The church or organized religion, the military, and the U.S. Supreme Court top a list of 10 selected institutions in which Americans have the greatest confidence.

Statistically equivalent numbers currently express "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in organized religion (59%), the military (58%), and the High Court (56%). While the Court has been among the top-rated institutions since The Gallup Poll began to monitor the public's confidence, the latest results mark the first time the Court has ranked squarely in the most respected group.

From 1973 until 1985, organized religion stood alone as the nation's most trusted institution, losing that distinction to the military the following year. The military has declined slightly from its high point of 63% confidence in 1986 but remains above its low of 50% in 1981. Confidence in the Supreme Court has increased by 14 percentage-points since 1983, from 42% to 56% in 1985 and 1988.

In the next tier of institutions tested are banks and the public schools, with 49% saying they have a high degree of confidence in each. Farther down the list are newspapers (36%), Congress (35%), television (27%), organized religion (26%), and big business (25%).

Consistent with the results of earlier surveys, women, blacks, older Americans, Southerners, and the less well-educated currently express greater confidence in the church than do people from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Here is the question:

*I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one — a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little.*

Here are the latest results:

**Confidence in Institutions**
(Percent saying "great deal" or "quite a lot")

| | 1988 % |
|---|---|
| Church or organized religion | 59 |
| Military | 58 |
| U. S. Supreme Court | 56 |
| Banks | 49 |
| Public schools | 49 |
| Newspapers | 36 |
| Congress | 35 |
| Television | 27 |
| Organized labor | 26 |
| Big business | 25 |

Here is the 15-year trend for the Church or organized religion:

**Confidence In The Church Or Organized Religion**
(Percent saying "great deal" or "quite a lot")

| | |
|---|---|
| 1988 | 59% |
| 1987 | 61 |
| 1986 | 57 |
| 1985 | 66 |
| 1984 | 64 |
| 1983 | 62 |
| 1981 | 64 |
| 1979 | 65 |
| 1977 | 64 |
| 1975 | 68 |
| 1973 | 66 |

As the following table also shows, confidence in

*(continued on page 2)*

# Survey Shows Potential For Church Growth

The prospects for church growth right now are good, as determined by a recent major survey conducted by The Gallup Organization, *The Unchurched American, 1988* for Congress 88, A National Festival of Evangelism.

The oranization gives six reasons for its conclusion:

1. The unchurched today are, by many measures, more religious than they were a decade ago (when Gallup did a similar study).
2. The unchurched have a "significant degree" of traditional religious belief, with only 18 percent claiming no religious affiliation and 63 percent believing the Bible to be either the literal or inspired word of God.
3. Fifty-eight percent of the unchurched said they would "definitely," "probably," or "possibly" return to church, up from 52 percent in 1978.
4. Sixty-eight percent of the unchurched — along with 85 percent of the churched — said they would invite others to join their denomination.
5. The percentage of children receiving religious training shows a slight upward trend. This fact should contribute to church growth since religious training in youth is related to a person's being churched as an adult.
6. Many reasons for being unchurched are practical and apparently could be addressed relatively easily. Half of those who left church after moving, for example, said they never got around to looking for a new church. An intensified invitation program should "yield positive results."

Gallup said those returning to church after an absence of two years or more are likely to be motivated by an inner personal need to return rather than external factors such as marriage or having children.

The study's data, the organization reports, suggest "certain courses of action for churches to consider," including:

- Being more responsive to the growing public belief in Jesus Christ; listening more carefully to people's accounts of spiritual journeys and religious experiences and helping them build on those experiences.
- Encouraging religious education programs even more strongly than at present, including forging a firmer partnership between churches and parents to foster religious training at home.
- Intensifying a program of invitation and evangelization.
- Promoting prayer and Bible study groups which would meet in places other than church.

*(continued from page 1)*

the Church or organized religion has trended downward over the last 15 years:

| | Average |
|---|---|
| Early 1970's (1973, 1975) | 67% |
| Late 1970's (1977, 1979) | 64 |
| Early 1980's (1981, 1983, 1984, 1985) | 64 |
| Late 1980's (1986, 1987, 1988) | 59 |

The latest findings are based on in-person interviews with 1,030 adults, 18 and older, conducted in more than 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation Sept. 23-26.

For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects should not exceed 4 percentage points in either direction. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into findings of opinion polls.

# Pharmacists, Clergy Rated Highest For 'Honesty, Ethical Standards'

Pharmacists and clergymen are perceived by the public as having higher "honesty and ethical standards" than people employed in 23 other occupations.

Although some occupations receive low ratings in these studies, it is important to bear in mind that the findings reflect the public's perceptions and are not necessarily indicative of the true ethical standards of the groups studied. Nevertheless, the results suggest a need for remedial efforts on the part of poorly-rated professions and occupations.

### Pharmacists Top List

For the first time since pharmacists have been included in the audit, they come out at the top of the scale, with 66% giving them a very high or high ethical rating. Next are clergymen, with a 60% positive rating.

From 1981 through 1985, the clergy slightly outranked pharmacists, though not by statistically significant margins. In 1985, for example, 67% gave clergymen a favorable grade compared to 65% for pharmacists. In terms of "very high" ratings — the top position on the scale — the clergy continue to be more highly regarded than pharmacists, 22% to 14%.

Collectively, the occupations that receive the lowest scores for honesty and ethics are those that involve selling. Only about one person in 10 rates the ethics of real estate agents, stockbrokers, insurance salesmen, advertising practitioners or car salesmen in positive terms.

In contrast, about four in 10 rate each of these occupations as very low or low.

Following is the question and key findings:

*How would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields — very high, high, average, low or very low?*

**Honesty and Ethical Standards**

| | Very high, high | Average | Low, very low | No opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Druggists, pharmacists | 66 | 29 | 3 | 2 |
| Clergymen | 60 | 28 | 8 | 4 |
| College teachers | 54 | 35 | 6 | 5 |
| Medical doctors | 53 | 38 | 7 | 2 |
| Dentists | 51 | 39 | 7 | 3 |
| Engineers | 48 | 41 | 4 | 7 |
| Policemen | 47 | 39 | 11 | 3 |
| Bankers | 26 | 55 | 15 | 4 |
| Funeral directors | 24 | 50 | 18 | 8 |
| Journalists | 23 | 49 | 22 | 6 |
| TV reporters, commentators | 22 | 53 | 22 | 3 |
| Newspaper reporters | 22 | 53 | 22 | 3 |
| Building contractors | 22 | 53 | 20 | 5 |
| Senators | 19 | 52 | 24 | 5 |
| Lawyers | 18 | 45 | 33 | 4 |
| Business executives | 16 | 54 | 25 | 5 |
| Congressmen | 16 | 52 | 27 | 5 |
| Local office-holders | 14 | 50 | 31 | 5 |
| Labor union leaders | 14 | 35 | 45 | 6 |
| Real estate agents | 13 | 47 | 34 | 6 |
| Stockbrokers | 13 | 50 | 24 | 13 |
| State office-holders | 11 | 53 | 31 | 5 |
| Insurance salesmen | 10 | 41 | 45 | 4 |
| Advertising practitioners | 7 | 40 | 46 | 7 |
| Car salesmen | 6 | 29 | 63 | 2 |

Following is the trend in the percentage of Americans who give the clergy a "very high" or "high" rating, showing a decline since 1985:

**Rating of Clergy**
("Very high" and "high")

| | |
|---|---|
| 1981 | 63% |
| 1983 | 64 |
| 1985 | 67 |
| 1988 | 66 |

The latest findings are based on in-person interviews with 1,030 adults, 18 and older, conducted in more than 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation Sept. 23-26.

# For Everyone Who Wants To Understand America's Teens and Where They're Headed in the Future , then . . .

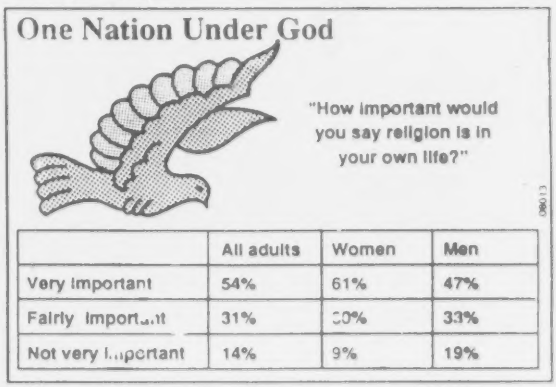
***America's Youth: 1977-1988*** tracks over 200 important trends on teen attitudes and behavior over the past ten years . . . analysis by Gallup's professional staff provides insights and ideas about the significant changes in teens that are important to researchers and leaders in business, marketing, sales, education, social work, government, and youth organizations.

For the trends, Gallup provides:

- Comparisons for Gallup studies among adults
- Nationwide, projectable samples
- Studies of all teen-agers, not just those of a certain age
- Long-term trends, not just single-point measurements
- Previously unpublished data
- Incisive analyses of the significance of trends

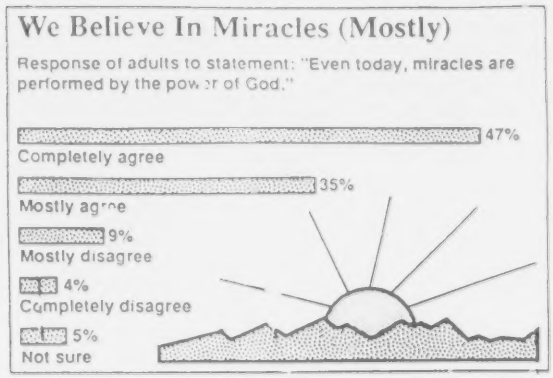
Much of the data is based on the Gallup Youth Survey, the oldest continuous measurement of teen attitudes and behavior in existence. By reserving your copy now, you can save 15% or more off the published price of $99 and be among the first to put this information to use. For information, call 609/924-9600, ext. 218.

**Gallup Graphics**




| | All adults | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|---|
| Very important | 54% | 61% | 47% |
| Fairly important | 31% | 30% | 33% |
| Not very important | 14% | 9% | 19% |

**Gallup Graphics**



# Poor Give More To Charity

Low-to-moderate income people are "more generous" than upper-income individuals in their contribution of volunteer time and money, according to a new survey. The survey was conducted by The Gallup Organization and commissioned by Independent Sector, a coalition of non-profit groups.

About seven in 10 American households make charitable donations each year, and they average $790 per household, according to this survey.

The survey also found that about 45% of American adults volunteer their time to charitable causes, averaging 4.7 hours per week. The survey found that volunteer work excluding informal activities totalled almost 15 billion hours, worth $150 billion at $10 an hour.

Religious groups were by far the biggest recipient of money, the survey found, averaging $715 in donations from each contributing household in 1987, more than double that of any other category. Educational institutions were next at $293, followed by international groups, $281, and artistic-cultural-humanities recipients, $260.

Brian O'Connell, Independent Sector president, said the survey showed that "contrary to popular opinion, the well-to-do American cannot be described as generous."

The survey found that households with under $10,000 income, averaged 2.8% of income donations, those between $50,000 and $75,000 gave 1.5%, those from $75,000 to $100,000 gave 1.7% and those over $100,000 gave 2.1%

# Why Is It In The Public Interest For People To Participate In Churches?

The strength of the nation's social fabric and its quality of life depend on volunteerism in the public interest. Gallup surveys report that three times as many participants in churches and synagogues are "very active" in their "involvement with civic, social, and charitable activities" as are non-participants.

The nation's human capital and productivity are plagued by drug abuse. The public interest is well served by the relatively strong rejection of illicit drug use among people who attend a church or synagogue. For example, twice the number of these people reject "acceptance of marijuana use" as do those who do not participate in a church or synagogue.

Homes, offices, and factories make demands that aren't always fun. Our studies find that more participants in churches and synagogues "strongly agree" that "duty comes before pleasure" than do non-participants by a margin of 57% to 49%. And attitude makes a difference. Findings show that more participants in churches and synagogues "strongly agree" that "facing my daily tasks is a source of pleasure and satisfaction" than do non-participants by a margin of 45% to 36%.

Fulfilled inner needs among the leaders and the led in the nation is clearly in the public interest. Among those who stopped attending a church or synagogue for two years and then began attending again, the leading factor in their return was that they "felt an inner need to go back." And not surprisingly, across that nation, twice as many participants in religious congregations "strongly agree" that "most churches and synagogues are effective in helping people find meaning in life" as do non-participants.

Baron Charles Louis Montesquieu, whose book, *The Spirit of Laws*, published in 1748, had a profound influence on the framers of the Constitution, wrote that democratic republics depend for survival on a "virtuous citizenry" — people who work, volunteer, give, and vote with an eye on the larger good. In spite of changes in political fortunes and educational practices, religious institutions in this nation have always had the freedom and the mandate to cultivate a "virtuous citizenry." In a nation that enjoys freedom of religion within a context of robust religious pluralism, the public interest is well served by broad respect for religious traditions and the active participation of increasing numbers of Americans in the life of its churches and synagogues.

*(From a paper written by George Gallup, Jr. and Nicholas Van Dyck for Religion in American Life.)*

# How To Reach The Unchurched American

Millions of Americans remain unchurched, and many churches are continuing to experience losses in membership. What can be done to reach the unchurched American? How can present members be kept in the fold?

New light is shed on these pressing questions by the results of a just-completed major survey of the nation's adults, THE UNCHURCHED AMERICAN — 1988. The focus of this survey is on the factors that cause people to leave the church — and those that cause them to return.

This survey, which reports updates of many of the questions asked in the landmark survey of a decade ago (THE UNCHURCHED AMERICAN, 1978), compares and contrasts the attitudes of the churched and unchurched on social changes, lifestyle factors, basic religious beliefs and many other factors that are related to churchlessness.

Special attention in this 1988 survey has been given to the religious experience and needs of blacks and Hispanics in the United States.

The report, based on this important survey, provides full statistical details, comparisons with 1978 results, as well as a special section which offers practical steps to reach the unchurched in your community.

For good, solid, practical information that can help YOU in YOUR ministry — both in reaching new people and in deepening the commitment of the present members of your church — write for the new report, THE UNCHURCHED AMERICAN — 1988.

To place your order write: The Princeton Religion Research Center, P.O. Box 628, Princeton, NJ 08542. Cost per copy is $29.00.

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